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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Amb. Edelman: Reason to be concerned about Kirkuk - Aksam
Turkmen return to Tal Afar - Sabah
Tal Afar a ghost town - Turkiye
Turkey introduces heavy penalties for torture - Aksam
EU to send last-minute torture inspection team to Turkey -
Milliyet
UN to reduce peacekeeping force in Cyprus - Milliyet
Devout Jews don't want Madonna in Israel - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS

Amb. Edelman: Osman Ocalan is still a terrorist - Zaman
MFA: We have received US assurances on Tal Afar - Radikal
No foreign terrorists among those killed in Tal Afar - Zaman
56 killed, 167 injured in Tal Afar - Cumhuriyet
Greek Cypriot politicians visit north Cyprus - Cumhuriyet
Sudan denies chemical weapons use in Darfur - Zaman
Syrian army tests chemical weapons in Darfur - Radikal
Peace still far from Darfur - Cumhuriyet
Schools open in Beslan - Radikal

BRIEFING

Ambassador Edelman's press roundtable: In a roundtable with bureau chiefs of four leading Turkish dailies, US Ambassador Edelman discussed recent developments in Iraq, and particularly the situation in Tal Afar. Ambassador Edelman said the US has responded positively to Turkey's concerns about the need to avoid civilian casualties and to concerns about possible efforts to change the demographic balance in the northern Iraqi town. Edelman noted that several hundred insurgents opposed to the efforts of the Iraqi interim government had entered Tal Afar. 'From our experience in Najaf and Fallujah,' he continued, 'we know that it doesn't take too many armed insurgents to take over a good-sized city and terrorize the population.' The Ambassador said that many of the people who had entered Tal Afar came from Najaf and Fallujah. The operation removed the threat by insurgent forces in the city.' Ambassador Edelman said the US had very intense discussions with the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the Turkish General Staff (TGS) about Tal Afar, and that Turkish liaison officers both in Baghdad and Tampa at CENTCOM Headquarters were informed of the operation. Commenting on Kirkuk, Edelman said the 'very complex' property issues in Kerkuk would be handled by a transparent, law-based property return process. He stressed that the US is 'trying to make sure that there is no change to the demographic balance in Kirkuk by force of arms.' Edelman also noted that he expects the new mayor to be announced in Tal Afar to be 'a product of the Turkmen.' Responding to a question regarding the 'insufficient' representation of the Turkmen, Ambassador Edelman said that no one would know the real composition of the population until Iraq has a census, which will take place later this fall. On the PKK issue, Edelman said the US faced a 'very challenging' set of security issues in Iraq, particularly in places where coalition forces are actually located. 'That doesn't mean we forget about our undertakings and responsibilities. We will take action at an appropriate time and place,' Edelman stressed. He reiterated the commitment, as stated by President Bush during his Ankara visit, that Iraq will not be an area where terrorist organizations can take refuge. Edelman also emphasized that the US continues to recognize the PKK and all of its successor organizations as terrorist organizations. Responding to a question on alleged US support for PKK 'defector' Osman Ocalan, the Ambassador said 'we continue to regard Osman Ocalan as a terrorist'. 'As a matter of policy, we don't make concessions to terrorists, and that includes protecting them,' he added. Coverage of the Ambassador's roundtable appeared in today's editions of "Aksam," "Zaman," "Tercuman," and "Vatan."

Situation in Tal Afar: Some Turkish dailies speculate that the US has taken the northern Iraqi town of Tal Afar for the sake of American strategic plans in the area. On Friday, a Turkish convoy of seven trucks carrying humanitarian aid will leave Turkey for Tal Afar, according to MFA spokesman Namik Tan. "Hurriyet" reports that the US military in Iraq agreed to allow Turkish special forces to enter Tal Afar to assess the needs of the city and to coordinate with US forces on the distribution of humanitarian goods.

FM Gul due in US: Turkish FM Abdullah Gul will go to New York on Friday to attend UN General Assembly meetings, papers report. In a meeting with Secretary of State Colin Powell, Gul will reiterate Turkey's position that Ankara will not remain indifferent to attacks against the Turkmen in Tal Afar. Gul will also urge Powell not to delay US action to remove of the PKK presence in northern Iraq. Gul and Powell will also discuss ending the international isolation of Turkish Cypriots.

Osman Ocalan speaks to Turkish dailies: Turkey's mass appeal daily "Vatan" and mainstream "Milliyet" interviewed PKK defector Osman Ocalan, brother of imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. In the interview, which took place in the northern Iraqi town of Suleymaniye, Ocalan said his group opposed armed struggle. He claimed the US preferred Turkey to be in contact with organizations that advocate a political struggle. Ocalan also claimed to have gained US backing, and added that he supports the US intervention in Iraq. "Vatan" regards the free movement of Osman Ocalan in northern Iraq as supporting his claims that the United States condones his activities. Unlike his brother Abdullah, Osman Ocalan said he was positive toward Turkey's ruling AKP. In the interview with "Milliyet," Ocalan applauded Turkish reforms for democratization, and voiced hope that the time for dialogue was approaching. Ocalan's aide, Nizamettin Tas, told "Milliyet" that the Americans have warned them against terrorist actions in Turkey in past PKK meetings with 'US military and intelligence officials.'

Travel ban on Kurdish lawmakers to be removed: Leyla Zana and her former DEP lawmaker colleagues will be allowed to go to Brussels to receive the Sakharov Prize, which had been awarded to Zana in 1995, "Sabah" reports. A travel ban imposed by the State Security Court in 1994 on Zana and her colleagues will be scrapped. Ankara does not want a 'passport crisis' with the EU on the eve of the forthcoming EU summit meeting in December, at which Turkey is expected to be granted a date for entry talks, "Sabah" comments.

EU to send 'torture inspection' team to Turkey: The European Commission is sending a fact-finding team to Turkey this week to investigate allegations of systematic torture raised by human rights groups, the EU said on Wednesday. 'One NGO made serious allegations of systematic torture in Turkey. Others said there were still some cases of torture but they were no longer systematic or officially sanctioned,' spokesman Jean-Christophe Filori said. 'The EU does not take these accusations lightly,' Filori said, adding that 'it is natural that we check information before publishing such an important report.'

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq / 9/11 Anniversary

"Global War in Iraq"
Erdal Safak noted in the mass appeal "Sabah" (9/16): "Some used to characterize the opposition to the US operation in Iraq as 'resistance' to the occupation. But today, even strong opponents of the US-UK operation have started to view the current violence, bloodshed, and chaos in Iraq as illegitimate. The French President, for instance, observed that 'Pandora's box' has been opened in Iraq. The French Foreign Minister is worried about 'a black hole' that he believes will spread from Iraq to other areas in the Middle East and around the world. If you ask the Arab League's opinion about Iraq, Secretary General Amr Musa describes the situation as 'the gates of hell' being opened in Iraq. The most correct diagnosis, I think, comes from Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi, who says that 'Iraq has become a part of a global war.' The main goal of the terrorists is to make Iraq collapse, move further into the Middle East, and eventually destabilize the whole world. The ongoing war is indeed between the civilized world and the terrorists."

"The Middle East Arena"
Ali Bayramoglu argued in the Islamist-opinion maker "Yeni Safak" (9/16): "Since the events of 9/11, the US has implemented a new security policy that emphasizes the formulation of a security concept based on military considerations rather than political analysis. The new approach also reformulates the concepts of human rights, seeking to balance such rights with security considerations. Today, everyone can see the growing split between the Islamic world and the West. Iraq is a clear example. The conflict in Iraq represents not only a resistance by the

people of Iraq against the US and other Western armies, but also serves as a battlefield between international militants and world military power. All of this leads us to the conclusion that the Iraq war and the more authoritarian approach fed by US paranoia and fear have resulted in more violence. The violence has fed on itself. Such an immoral war and its aftermath will eventually bring about serious consequences for those who launched it."

"Three Years After September 11"

Zafer Atay wrote in the economic-political "Dunya" (9/16): "According to the most conservative estimates, more than 15,000 Iraqi civilians and over 1,000 US troops have died in the war in Iraq. Although a decision has been made to hold elections in Iraq, it is not clear whether that can be realized. The division of Iraq is also a possibility. With the US supporting Kurdish efforts to establish their own administration in the north, Iraq's majority Shiites and the Sunnis are fighting for power. Saddam and many of his aides have been caught and jailed. But no one knows where and when they will be tried. There has been a split in American society ever since the Vietnam war. IN some circles in the United States, the Iraq operation is now being widely criticized. The US elections will take place in November. The Democrats are criticizing the Bush Administration's policies harshly. There are some US reports that provide valuable insight. The National Commission Report, which was prepared to examine how to prevent possible terrorist attacks against the US, has been released and runs to more than 500 pages. The conclusion is that September 11 resulted from the incompetence of the Clinton and Bush Administrations, particularly within their intelligence organizations. Another report, called simply 'The Iraq Report,' claims that the Bush administration basically lied about the reasons for starting the war. There are no WMDs in Iraq. There is no truth to rumors that Saddam had started to produce a nuclear weapon. And it is not true that Saddam's administration was cooperating with Al-Qaeda. Secretary of State Colin Powell has confirmed these

SIPDIS observations. These conclusions have shaken the foundations of the CIA, which was previously believed to be untouchable. George Tenet, head of the CIA, has resigned. The intelligence organizations in the US are being restructured. President Bush and his team could even lose the election because of these lies as much as the Al-Qaeda issue."

EDELMAN